

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Water Quality Planning

Proposed Changes to Water Quality Standards

Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 445A.124 - 127 and NAC 445A.146 - 225

Fact Sheet
July 2006

Background

Section 303 of the Clean Water Act and 40 CFR 131 give states responsibility for setting, reviewing and revising beneficial uses and water quality standards. State of Nevada authorities are contained in Nevada Revised Statutes 445A.425, 520 and 565 and water quality standards for waters of Nevada are found in the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 445A.118 through 445A.225. Water quality standards are set for a waterbody segment at a level designed to protect and ensure a continuation of the designated beneficial use(s) set for the waterbody. Standards are based on criteria, such as, physical, chemical and biological characteristics, to protect the designated beneficial use(s). Workshops are held to obtain comments on proposed beneficial uses and/or water quality standards from federal, state and local agencies and the general public. Proposed standards are presented at a public hearing to the Nevada State Environmental Commission (SEC) for review and adoption. Standards adopted by the SEC are then subject to approval by the USEPA before incorporating into the NAC.

Summary of Changes to Water Quality Standards

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) is proposing to make two categories of changes to the Nevada Administrative Code: 1) adjustments and additions to the Class Waters, 445A.124 through 445A.127, and; 2) a reorganization of Water Quality Standards Tables, NAC 445A.124 through 127 and 445A.146 through 225.

1) Adjustments and additions to the Class Waters

- Adjust class waters beneficial use terminology to match the beneficial uses listed in NAC 445A.122;
- Remove redundant narrative standards cited in the class tables given that the narratives in NAC 445A.121 apply;
- Add Total Ammonia to all current class waters by referencing the tables in NAC 445.118;
- Add E. Coli standards to all current class waters;
- Remove footnote 3 for Fecal Coliform Standards referring to Class C primary contact recreation waters;
- Revise references to natural conditions for:
 - Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in classes A, B and C; and
 - Fecal Coliform in class C.

2) Reorganizing the Water Quality Standards Tables

- Reformat all water quality standard tables to more clearly show the beneficial uses that are associated with each water quality parameter;
- Eliminate the current class waters format (NAC 445A.124 - 127) that has individual waterbodies identified as a part of a class group and create an individual table showing water quality standards for each waterbody designated within the class structure and place waters into the current single reach table format; and,
- Reorganize the individual water quality standards tables by Hydrographic Region and renumber all the waterbody tables (NAC 445A.124 through 127 and 146 through 225);

NDEP is updating the class waters to reflect current EPA recommended criteria for ammonia and *Escherichia Coli*. Removing the beneficial uses and narrative standards redundancies will simplify the standards and reduce confusion. Under the current class standards structure any action necessary to address standards criteria on a class waterbody affects all other waters within the same class. Reformatting the class waters into the proposed designated waterbody structure allows more flexibility to address the setting of appropriate water quality standards. Reorganizing and renumbering the water quality standards by hydrographic basin will facilitate the use of the tables.

For questions, comments or additional information please contact:

John Heggeness [775-687-9449]
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Water Quality Planning
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 4001
Carson City, Nevada 89701
FAX: (775) 687-5856
jheggene@ndep.nv.gov